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NINE COLONIES.

BY

FRITZ GEROLDT.

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NINE COLONIES.

I FEEL myself suddenly caught hold of and kissed. Being an unprotected male, I am rather alarmed at first, but finding that she is nice-looking, I become resigned, content, and reciprocal. "Good-bye, darling!" she says; and then suddenly finds that I am not the darling that she took me for, and her pain at parting from me is much diminished in consequence. She is gone and lost to my view.

We are on the P. and O. steamer *Deccan*, the last bell has sounded, and the cry, "Now for the shore," is heard for the last time. A confused crowd of friends who have come

13 Oct. 1920

to see us off, and of intending travellers who wish to see their friends off the ship, completely blocks the gangway, and seems to render it utterly impossible for any one to move either way; but at length, just as our screw begins to revolve, the last visitor jumps on board the tender—and very nearly misses his footing and gets a ducking in doing so—a cheer from the tug, and we are fairly off.

The first thing to do now is to see what the ladies on board are like, as we are not likely to see them again for four or five days. One or two young and pretty, but leaning lovingly on men, who look exasperatingly like newly married husbands. One again very lonely looking, and seeming to be rather shy of the grey old Indian colonel and his wife, who are taking her out to her intended husband in India. She is probably not exactly like what she was when he left her, just eight years ago, as she is now thirty-two, and rather inclined to *embonpoint*. Let us

hope he will be pleased with her, or at any rate will not try to back out of his engagement—a thing which has been known to happen under similar circumstances.

It will be as well now to go below and look after our luggage while we are yet inside the Needles, for it may be rougher when we get outside; and people often lose all interest in making their cabins neat when this is the case.

I find that I have got somebody else in my cabin. He has come on board at the last moment, and blasted my hopes of having a cabin to myself, by having all his luggage put into the cabin, and on to the top of mine. I first examine the labels to find out his name, and see that he is going to Australia, so I shall have him with me all the way to Point de Galle, my destination. I then remove all his things and come to mine, which are carefully arranged with all I want at the bottom; however, I unlock a

box, and take out what I am likely to want immediately, creating great confusion in the box by so doing.

Having made these little arrangements, I put on my overcoat and go on deck to smoke a pipe: it is cold and drizzling, and there are several men walking up and down alone, smoking. I go up to one and make a mild remark on the weather; but he seems to treat it as a personal insult, and seeks the other side of the deck. I try another with a word about the ship, and he is a little more responsive, but also leaves me directly. A third attempt is more fortunate, for this time I light upon a man who has travelled before, and who is therefore not needlessly suspicious of every stranger who speaks to him, and with him I walk about and smoke for a long time.

The afternoon has passed rather slowly, but it is at last getting near dinner time, and I go below to get ready for dinner.

In the cabin I find my mate for the voyage — whom I had been looking for rather anxiously—and I soon find that he is likely to be agreeable ; also that as regards dressing in the morning (there not being room for two of us to dress together comfortably), he prefers getting up early—a great consolation to me, as I don't, the day being quite long enough for me, aboard ship, if I begin it with breakfast. The dinner bell sounds, and we enter the long saloon—some of us with a good deal of fear and trembling, as we are just passing the Needles, and a slight “jump” begins to make itself felt.

A good many do not appear at all, having already made up their minds to be ill, and unwittingly taking the best means to secure the desired (?) result, by abstaining from food. I am not quite certain of myself, but soon feel all right as dinner progresses. What is that, which has suddenly overthrown the steward as he is coming in with a tray of

plates? Only some one whose confidence in his powers was too great, and who has been sitting opposite me munching tiny crumbs of bread, and neglecting all other food, and who has suddenly turned of a pale green colour, and thought he would go on deck. These little episodes enliven a sea voyage—especially for the pale green man!

The next morning I go on deck after breakfast and find an overgrown boy—who thinks he is a man—looking curiously at the compass, evidently thinking that it has something to do with the gas. As he seems anxious for information I give him a good deal of it—explaining to him, amongst other things, that they do not use gas at sea, and that the compass is used for measuring the men's grog, and also for winding up the capstan. He is much edified, and at once sees that I know all about it. I next give him the names of all the sails (none of which I know rightly myself, but he doesn't know

either), and he clearly has a thirst for information which must be satisfied. I hope that his mind will be much enlarged by travel, and I am sure that he will continue to get information quite out of the common if he continues to come to me for it.

On Saturday we are fairly in the Bay of Biscay, and all the ladies remain below ill; not that the sea is rough, but that it is the correct thing to fancy it rough in the much-maligned Bay. I don't think it is any worse than the rest of the North Atlantic.

On Sunday we find that we have no clergy on board, and as all the ladies are still invisible, the captain decides that it is too rough to have service. I have noticed that, whatever the weather may be, it generally is "too rough" to have service on the first Sunday.

Soon we sight the coast of Portugal and the mouth of the Tagus in the distance; and as the air gets warmer, and the sea calmer,

first one and then another of the ladies come on deck, looking most woebegone and pale, and dressed anyhow. The newly-married ones lean on their husbands (some of whom are ill too), and the husband begins to find that matrimony is not always pleasant, especially when your darling is ill, and looks as if she wanted ironing. The stout intended looks pretty well, but much dishevelled, as she leans on her chaperon for support. She is at any rate fairly strong, if she is no longer lovely.

We are beginning to find out who everybody is by this time, and where they are going to. We have several officers for Gibraltar and Malta, several more for India; civilians for India, and doctors, all returning from leave in England; several young men going to coffee plant in Ceylon; half a dozen young Irish doctors, fresh from the hospitals, for the army in India; a merchant or two for Singapore and China; one or two wealthy squatters for Australia—these latter think a

good deal of themselves ; a butcher who has made money—and young men for all these places. Another young lady appears on the deck for the first time ; she is to be married at Galle to a prosperous planter, and she thinks that she is going to enjoy all the luxuries of the gorgeous East. I am sorry for her, as she *may* be disappointed. However, she seems determined to make the best of the time, and is evidently endeavouring to practise what she shall say to her future husband, as she is in deep and apparently interesting conversation with one of the young doctors. Let us hope that he has left his lady love behind, and is merely rehearsing some of the old tender scenes which took place but so short a time ago.

The bell sounds for lunch, and we see the table at last well-lined with faces, and every one apparently with an enormous appetite.

Early one fine morning we sight Gibraltar, and come to anchor there shortly after break-

fast. Great is our eagerness to get on shore, and stretch our legs again on dry land. Parties are being formed for going ashore together and to see everything that is to be seen, and a few adventurous ones of us think of climbing to the signal station. I am not one of these, as the day is hot, and I have climbed a good many mountains before. We cast our eyes longingly on shore, looking for boats to come and take us off. My curious friend comes and asks me what a line of rather handsome obelisks above the town are meant to commemorate, and I duly inform him that they are monuments to the memory of the glorious dead, who fell in the memorable siege. I have since found that they are merely "stink holes" to the main sewer. At length the shore boats arrive, and begin jostling each other to get near the companion-ladder. Most of the parties that have been so carefully arranged get separated, and have to go in different boats; however

all are determined to make the most of a short run on shore, and enjoy themselves. We get ashore, and are at once in the narrow foreign-looking streets of the town. In the square is an orange tree with ripe oranges growing on it—a pleasant sight to our eyes, which last looked on England in February. The young men who are going to seek their fortunes in various parts of the world, most of them invest largely in Manilla cigars here ; I am sure I don't know why, as they are generally not good—but I think they have an idea that Manilla is in the immediate neighbourhood, and that therefore they ought to be cheap. After a few hours on shore we have to make for the ship again, as the P. and O. wait for no one, and if we are not in time we lose our passage. Folks are a good deal more sociable this evening, after being on shore, and it is late ere many of us turn in. A few more days of fairly calm weather and we arrive at Malta.

The only amusing incident on the way was that, one fine day, when all the ports were open, though there was a moderate swell on, a roller a little bigger than the others came along, and just came into every cabin on one side of the ship. I was able to enjoy this incident the more as it was not on my side.

We go into the quarantine harbour at Valetta, and a beautiful sight is the town, with its churches, palaces, and fortresses rising one above another.

Nearly the whole of the island appears to be built on, as far as I can tell from one or two flying visits there.

We get ashore, and go up the steep streets to the citadel, whence a lovely view is obtainable; and far below in the large harbour lies the Mediterranean fleet. Maltese jewellery and lace are the things on which the passengers principally squander their money here. I am told that if one lives here things may

be got reasonably enough, but that immediately the steamers arrive, up go the prices. There are many things worthy of notice here—the palace, the Templars' church, and the curious vaults where you can go down and see dried monks, being among the most remarkable.

We are off again the next day, at dawn ; but I am happy to say that I remain quite oblivious to this fact until I am awakened by the first breakfast bell. Up I jump, and secure a bath without waiting. By the way, it is a lamentable fact that the baths are by no means crowded during the first few days of the voyage ; I fear that sea-sickness makes the Briton forget his birthright—as a Briton—of cleanliness. The baths are no colder at sea than on shore.

It is very wonderful to me, who do not thoroughly understand the mysteries of a lady's toilet—and I believe it is still more wonderful to those who do—to see how some

ladies manage to have a different dress for nearly every day, throughout a long voyage. We know that the amount of space in the cabins is very limited, and the luggage room is only opened once a week.

Alexandria.—People do not now call here when going from Southampton, but I may as well mention it here. As soon as you land, the first thing that strikes the eye (and nose) is a dense crowd of all the unclean races of the earth, who all jostle and shove you under pretence of wishing to be your guide. If you are well acquainted with the ways and habits of these parts, the next thing that you do is to strike the eye or nose of the nearest of them and to continue doing so to more of them until way is made for you. Having got through the crowd on the quay, we are next beset by a crowd of donkeys; it is well to take one of these, as it is easier to get through the narrow streets on them, than walking: they go fast, and if any one gets

in the way he is apt to be knocked down. When we are securely (or insecurely) seated on the top of the wondrous pile of rags and cushions which do duty for a saddle, off we go, helter-skelter, to see the sights. These were, Cleopatra's Needle, lying in the sand—but this, alas! now stands on the Thames, and is an object of interest to few—and next Pompey's Billar, so pronounced by the natives (Pompey's Pillar). The rest of the town is mostly oriental in its appearance and odours (*i.e.* very dirty), but part of the large square has good buildings and fine shops with plate-glass windows. It is seldom that a large party of voyagers arrive at Pompey's Pillar on their donkeys without some mishaps—first, a man will lean heavily on one stirrup; and he only realises that they are both fastened to one sliding strap when he is looking at the donkey from the side of the road, while the moke smiles gently at his innocence, and makes a kick which just misses

his head. Another gets a kicker, and is sent over its head; while another gets one which refuses to go in the right direction, taking more interest in grain-growing than in visiting the monuments of history.

Many of the natives here seem to suffer from sore eyes, which is not to be wondered at, as you may see them everywhere asleep in the sun, with the flies crawling all over their faces, quite unregarded. During my stay here I went with several others to see the yacht of the Khedive (Ismail Pasha). It was most gorgeously fitted up, but I and my friends, several of whom were naval officers, were slightly astonished at its being intimated to us that we ought to tip the first lieutenant! Backsheesh is the cry throughout Egypt; this man wants it because he says he did something for you, and lies when he says it, and this one because he didn't do it. A crowd is always around Pompey's Pillar—at any rate when the steamers are in—who

demand backsheesh because they are there at the same time as you are. If you give any, you are followed by others who want it worse than before, as your reputation gets about.

But to return to our ship. Leaving Alexandria behind, we steam straight on for Port Said, the entrance to the Suez canal—a small place, regularly built, and looking as if it was just put down there temporarily, and might be moved again next week. I believe it is the resort of all the blackguards who find Europe too hot to hold them. Men of all races of Europe and Asia Minor seem to be here, and I suppose that most of them get a living somehow, honestly or dishonestly, out of the vessels which are continually passing. We stopped for the night, and took in coal—which is done as quickly here as at any place I have seen. The lighters are alongside almost as soon as we are moored, and a continuous line of blacks come running along, depositing their bags of coal at the bunkers

almost without stopping, and running on for another load. They make a most horrible row and dust all the time, and it is always better to be off a ship at coaling time, if possible. We are moored in the canal, but yet have to get a boat to take us the twenty yards or so which we have to go to get ashore. There is not very much to be seen, when we get on shore—a few shops selling photographs, amber, meerschaum, fezes, and other cheap Turkish goods ; and one or two *cafés chantants* or casinos, where a good band of music may be heard while we drink our liquors.

In one of these they saw that a good number of us English were present, and so struck up “God save the Queen”—a pleasant compliment ; but I suppose it is repeated in varied form for every ship of every nationality that comes through, and sends her quota of passengers ashore.

With daybreak we are off up the canal, and very slow and tedious is our progress

through it. Great as this work undoubtedly is in its effects, there is very little of interest to see when passing through it. When other ships are signalled coming the opposite way, one of us has to wait at a mooring place while the other is allowed to pass. The ships pass within a few yards of one another, and one may often recognise friends, and even speak to them, for the few moments that we are passing.

Towards evening we ran aground, about six miles from Ismailia, and it was not long before the donkey boys from that place had discovered our masts, and were down at the side of the canal, wanting us to ride up to the town; but, alas, no boat was forthcoming, and we had to stay on board, stopped by a few yards of water only. We managed to warp off again before morning, which fortunately generally happens, as one ship aground stops the traffic both ways. Through the Bitter Lakes we steam along at.

full speed, and another bit of canal brings us to Suez. If any difference exists, I believe that Suez is inhabited by a worse lot than Port Said ; at any rate it is larger, and the police here seem to be in league with the donkey men, and other scoundrels. The quay where the P. and O. boats lie is a long distance from the town ; two miles or so of lonely road. The donkey drivers ask exorbitant prices for the use of the donkeys ; and even if they agree for a certain sum to take you there and back, they generally stop you on a lonely part of the road and demand more—and the police assist them, if appealed to. The only way of going up to the town and back again, without annoyance (some say danger), is to form a sufficiently strong party to defy drivers, police, and all. A few dirty and noisy *cafés*, and the native bazaar, are about all to be seen in Suez, I believe.

Next morning we bid adieu to the passengers for Bombay—it is really heartbreaking some-

times, after having been a whole fortnight together at sea—and the overland passengers join us. These latter have been a few days together, and become mutually acquainted; and we regard each other with mutual distrust for about a day and a half. We, regarding them as interlopers on our ship, and they, I fancy, regarding us as people who have come out by long sea on the cheap.

We soon shake together, however, and as we get down the Red Sea the heat increases, and people begin to get out their thinnest clothes, and to evaporate, and to get pale, according to their several constitutions. It being too hot for any great exertion, our friend the young doctor lies all day at the feet of his (or rather the prosperous coffee-planter's) fair one, and they seem to find plenty of remarks for the whole time. She will certainly have a good deal to tell her future husband if she tells him all about the voyage out. As it gets hotter, it is usual, on

the P. and O. boats, for people to fancy that they can sleep better by bringing their mattresses up on deck, whence they are roused at about 5.30 A.M. for the decks to be washed. I never tried it myself, and never will; but I hope that they find relief from the process. If there is moonlight, it is most delightful to don one's pyjamas (which is allowable after 10 P.M.), and lounge about with a pipe, to cool, until one begins to feel tired enough to go to bed. Hotter and hotter it gets, until, after five days from Suez, we arrive at Aden; sometimes we meet our Bombay friends again here, as they have been steaming down the Red Sea almost in sight of us, all the time. Not a vestige of green is to be discerned at Aden: all seems to be vast mountains of bare rock, and plains of cinders, on which the sheep appear to be feeding—but I suspect that that is only a ruse on their part to take in the unsuspecting traveller.

The anchor is scarcely down before the ship is surrounded by dark-skinned naked boys, who paddle out in very narrow, dug-out canoes, and are clamorous for money to be thrown to them, to dive for. “’Ave a dive, ’ave a dive,” is heard continually from them from now until we leave the harbour. They are wondrous looking beings, with hair of the colour of tow (from being constantly in the salt water), and are very active in the water, seldom failing to secure the coin thrown to them before it has got far on its downward course. The harbour is said to be full of sharks, but they never seem to touch these boys, owing, some say, to a tradition handed down, and told by the oldest shark in the parish, that in bygone years an adventurous shark did eat one, and died in consequence.

The shore boats are alongside, and off we go for a change on shore. The heat is most intense, and the best thing to see is “the tanks,” which are at a distance of some five

miles from the port, and near to where the troops are stationed. These tanks have apparently been made by damming up a ravine or valley, and are capable of storing an enormous quantity of water ; but, as far as I know, they are always empty, except for a little dirty water in the topmost tank, as the rain is a little irregular in its times of falling here. Near these tanks, and nurtured by what little water there is, is an attempt at a garden ; and here is, I believe, to be found the only green vegetation in the place. It is amusing to stand for a while and watch the confusion and clamour with which the crowd of Arabs gathered here fill their water-skins and other vessels from the little water left in the tank. The lower town is now supplied with condensed sea-water, and the works for this should be worth a visit, if time admits.

Glad enough we are to get once more on board the steamer, and eat our dinner under

the cooling influence of the punkahs ; and as we steam out of the port, I think few of us wish to see Aden again for some time, much less to stay in it. We are off now for the longest bit, without calling at a port, which we have yet had ; and the coffee-planter's intended seems more than ever determined to practise billing and cooing until she gets there ; while the young doctor seems to make the most of his time, knowing that he will soon have to relinquish his claims to another.

A strong smell as of resin or scented soap assails my nose one morning, and Adam's Peak appears in sight, quite distinct, but at a distance of some sixty miles. It is at once explained to every one who has not been here before, that we are nearing the isle of Ceylon, and that what we smell are the "spicy breezes" wafted from it to us. Every one is enchanted, and thoroughly believes it, little knowing that some of the

officers have amused themselves by putting sweet smelling things about the rigging and bulwarks, in order to keep up the poetic idea first started by Bishop Heber, that the spices can be smelt afar off. Many of the passengers who go on to China or Australia are never undeceived, and believe it yet. The fact unfortunately is, that you can walk through a cinnamon garden, and will perceive positively no odour (unless they are applying manure to the trees at the time) until you take off a leaf and bruise it.

Shortly after tiffin we are entering Galle harbour, a narrow, partially land-locked bay, which is very beautiful to look at, with its fringe of cocoa-nuts all round, but which has proved the grave of many a stately ship, owing to its want of room and its sunken rocks. We are soon surrounded by catamarans, or native canoes, which are made of cocoa-nut wood, and very narrow, but are rendered quite safe by being

lashed to an outrigger ; everything is sewn together with fibre, and not a nail is used in their construction ; they have little grip on the water, and glide along with surprising speed. These boats contain Cynghalese and Moorman traders, who deal in tortoiseshell, ebony knickknacks, jewellery, shawls, and, in fact, nearly all the Indian and Chinese curiosities with which we in England are acquainted. They, like most Orientals, ask at first much more than they expect to get, and are much astonished when they sometimes do get it, from the uninitiated. The proper way to deal with them is to name a price about half what you mean to give, and gradually come up to meet them. If you name at first what you really do mean to give, they often don't understand it, and refuse to let you have the goods after all : or very often you may find a sporting tradesman who will toss you for rather more than the value of the article or half of it. Great care should be

taken in buying jewellery here, as, although there are good stones to be got, they are largely mixed with coloured glass from Birmingham.

On one occasion, when driving in Galle, I was offered a handsome gold ring with a large sapphire in it, for £2. 10s. I saw at once that it must be a sham, otherwise it would have been worth a good deal more, so I pretended to bargain with the would-be vendor, and kept him running along by the carriage for about half an hour, by which time he had reduced the price to 1s. !

I charter a catamaran as soon as I have got my luggage all out of the hold, and put the luggage on board, leaving just room for myself; and off we go, up and down on the swell, and inside some half sunken rocks, and in a few minutes we are at the landing stage. Here are porters of several languages, all jabbering at once, and wanting to take my luggage to the custom-house. I agree with

one, and am ushered into a cellar-like room, in the old Dutch fort which is where the custom-house now is. A civil black official soon lets me through, but I find that there is a difficulty about getting my things to Colombo, as the coach in which I intend to go allows very little luggage.

After a while it is arranged that it is to go up by bullock waggon, and will take at least four days on the road—distance only seventy-two miles.

The Oriental Hotel at Galle is probably the best known house in the world, Galle itself being a sort of Eastern Clapham Junction for steamers to nearly anywhere in the east or south.

What a pleasure it is to get into its long cool verandah, after walking up the short distance from the custom-house in a steamy heat (for there has just been a shower of rain), and to throw oneself into one of the easiest of cane-bottomed chairs, and call for an iced

long drink! But scarcely have I sat down than I am assailed again by traders of all descriptions, wishing to take the earliest advantage of a new comer.

I engage a room for the night, but do not go to see it at once, as I am afraid of being overcome by Eastern luxury all at once. Some of our fellow travellers determine to drive to the Cinnamon Gardens and Wakwalla, the principal drive from Galle, and I agree to go with them.

To any one who has just come off the sea, and who saw land last at Aden, the splendid verdure of the tropical vegetation on both sides of the road is most refreshing, especially if it be his first acquaintance with the tropics, and (in that case only) he wishes to live there for ever, and enjoy the luxury of doing nothing in a warm climate. When we reached Wakwalla we got out, and enjoyed the lovely view spread out before our eyes. Adam's Peak and the high mountains of the interior on

one side; and rich groves of cocoa-nuts and plantains, with a river flowing among them, and a glimpse or two of the sea, on the other. A house is here for the accommodation of visitors, and cautions are posted up against buying jewellery from chance dealers. The Cinnamon Gardens are principally remarkable for containing few or no cinnamon trees.

We drove back again in time to get a good dinner at the hotel, which included the prawn currie for which Galle is famous. In the evening we bid farewell to the passengers for Australia, who had been transhipped with all their luggage, and all the cargo there might be for Australia, and watched them leave from the ramparts, the buoys being lighted with torches to guide them out. After smoking for some time and enjoying the cool of the evening in the verandah, I sought my bedroom; it was a bare, whitewashed room, open to the roof, and containing a bed, two chairs, a washing stand and nothing else—such

is Oriental splendour. I was soon undressed, and thought to go to sleep, but it was not to be : for the mosquitoes discovered that a new comer was there, and at once proceeded to make things comfortable for me. It was very gratifying in the morning to see that they had eaten too much, and were hardly able to move ; so I took my revenge by squashing them.

A story is told of two strangers who were sleeping here in the same room, on their first night on shore : they were much tormented by the mosquitoes, and at last agreed to put out the light, to see if they could abate the nuisance. One of them soon saw a firefly enter, and at once called out to his companion, " It's no use ; here's one of the little beggars brought a lantern with him."

I got up with daylight in the morning, and went for a stroll ; it had rained in the night, and the whole place smelt of mould, like a freshly watered hot-house. I essayed to walk

out into the country, but found that which ever way I went houses still lined the road ; but there were lots of cocoa-nut trees, and I enjoyed the walk in this new scenery.

After breakfast the passengers for China went on board their steamer, and I went with them, and had lunch on board, after which they went off ; and shortly after the *Deccan* went on too, to Calcutta, leaving me alone, and ready to pursue my journey to Colombo. Early on the following morning the native servants might have been heard knocking violently at my door, and shouting, "Sah, sah," in fruitless endeavours to wake me. I had fallen asleep only after a protracted encounter with the mosquitoes, and after the use of much bad language (mostly English and German, as at that time I was unacquainted with the rich mines thereof to be found in Tamil and other Asiatic tongues).

The united efforts of the servants of the establishment at length succeeded in waking

me, and after a hurried breakfast I found myself seated in the coach "just in time," and continued sitting in it, and waiting for the mails, for at least half an hour more before we started.

The "coach" is a carriage with a cover over it, and blinds to let down at the sides; two or three natives are my only companions in it, on this occasion. After a time we start, and go gaily through the town, blowing a horn, in proper mail-coach style. The pace is good, while we are going, but we change horses about every ten miles, and a good deal of time is wasted in changing, as there is generally only one man to take out the tired horses and put the others in, besides which the fresh horses usually, firmly, but by no means calmly, refuse to start. After a time, however, unless the coach is first upset into one of the side drains, they generally set off at full gallop.

The road is for the most part smooth and hard, and very level, and the scenery is

beautiful, as nearly the whole route is bordered on both sides by cocoa-nut trees, and every now and then glimpses of the sea may be seen through them : notwithstanding this, however, it is a dusty and tiring journey, and I was very glad to get to the rest-house at Bantotte, where they gave me ample time for lunch and a wash. The rest-house is prettily situated on an eminence over a little bay of the sea, and the lunch consists, generally, of oysters served up in various ways, and at a reasonable price.

The bridges on this road, as on almost all others in Ceylon, have the roadway of planks uncovered, and they make a great noise while one is crossing them ; but I believe they are safer than if covered, as timber rots very soon, if covered, owing to the extreme moisture of the climate, and a rotten plank is easily discovered and replaced, if one can see it at once. Native houses line the road nearly the whole way, which gives one some

idea of how thickly populated the coast districts here are.

Towards evening I arrived at Colombo, very glad to have finished the journey, and stopped at the Galle Face Hotel. This is beautifully situated, close to the sea, and with the "Galle Face," a fine extent of grass, and the fashionable drive of Colombo, in front of it. All the business offices in the town are in the "Fort"—a close and hot place, where the old Dutch fort originally was—there are no fortifications of any use now. Most of the European inhabitants live in suburbs along the sea-coast, either north or south of the fort, and thus the town extends for a distance of about seven miles altogether. There is very little in the way of amusement to be found here at any time, as it is hardly worth while for any good company of opera singers or other such entertainments, to come here—and it is generally almost too hot to go to see them

if they did come. An artificial harbour is being made at Colombo, by means of a break-water, and when this is finished no doubt there will be more life in the place, as most likely there will be more steamers coming and going.

The "Cinnamon Gardens" is also a fashionable part to live in, and here the country is pretty, the evergreen foliage of all the trees contrasting well with the bright red colour of the soil, especially when seen in the early morning.

After a short stay in Colombo, I went up the country to Newera Eliya—the first part of the journey being by rail. It is a broad gauge railway, and many engineering difficulties were met with in its construction. The first part of it is through level and unhealthy land, which is liable to flood, until we reach the foot of the pass into the hills—a spot which has earned the ill-omened name of the "Valley of the Shadow of Death," from the number of lives which were lost,

through the unhealthiness of the climate, when they were constructing the line there.

Up the pass the line winds round the face of the hills at an inclination of about one in forty-five, and in some places one can look straight down to the valley beneath, some eight or nine hundred feet. A lovely view is unfolded as we get higher up the pass—everything verdant: and a peculiar effect is produced by the fact that all the land below is terraced for rice cultivation, making it look something like a child's puzzle map. At Peradeniya we change trains, the main line going on to Kandy. The Botanical Gardens here are well worth a visit, if only to see the splendid group of palms of all sorts in its centre; these gardens are also most useful in assisting the colonists to experiment with many useful tropical plants, which are not indigenous to Ceylon.

It is mainly through the exertions of people connected with these gardens, that

the cinchona (quinine) trees have been introduced into the island; and the cultivation of these trees now forms an important and highly lucrative industry in the colony.

Leaving Peradeniya a run of about eleven miles brings us to Gampola, and here we leave the railway. A ramshackle conveyance with two horses is called the "coach," and takes the mails and intending passengers by a first-rate but tortuous road to Rambodda, about thirty miles; and hence we have to find some other conveyance for the remaining twelve miles, the road being very steep. At last towards dusk we get to the top of the pass, and look down on Newera Eliya—a large basin at a height of some six thousand feet above the sea, and surrounded on all sides by mountains some two thousand feet higher. The air strikes chill, and it is hard to believe that we are but a day's journey from steamy Colombo. The "Club" is an excellent, though sadly cramped, hotel, and we are glad to draw

round the cheerful fire there after dinner. The principal excitement after dinner is to kill the flies, which have congregated on a piece of string hanging from the ceiling (probably intended to hang a lamp by), by igniting a saucer of gunpowder under them. It is most efficacious in killing them, but I fancy that the flies must find it a monotonous amusement, as the experiment is repeated night after night with great regularity.

It was my good fortune to find that an elk hunt was to take place the next day, and I started at about half-past five in the morning to join it. Coming somewhat recently from "the shires" I was naturally anxious to see the pack, and they were well worth seeing! Nearly all of them appeared to be in want of some "Restorer" (which is not a dye) to prevent the hair falling off, and to restore it in bald places. Very few breeds of dog, except pure ones, were unrepresented. A few foxhounds, or harriers, some greyhounds,

Australian kangaroo hounds, and crosses of most of these with the pariah, formed the bulk of the pack. We were on foot, and each armed with a hunting-knife, intended to stick the elk with, when brought to bay, and also to cut through the creepers in the jungle where it is too thick to make way without. We start off up a steep path, which leads to the top of Pedro-talla-Galla, generally known as "Pedro"—the highest mountain in Ceylon, some eight thousand feet high. As the morning mists began to clear away we occasionally caught glimpses of magnificent mountain scenery, but for the most part the jungle is too thick and high for us to see anything. We leave the path after a toilsome ascent of about an hour, and almost immediately the hounds give tongue, in an extra thick piece of jungle close to us. Slight fears are entertained by the master that it may turn out to be a chetah—which would destroy the dogs instead of giving us sport ; but in a

moment a large elk (or sambur) dashes right through the midst of us, oversetting the native dog boy—who is just uncoupling some hounds—in his haste, and we are all off after him down the mountain.

The dogs work well, notwithstanding their unprepossessing appearance, and the jungle re-echoes to their music. The pace is fast, and trying to wind and limb, so we are not sorry to come on the path up which we had come, and get down the mountain, without being impeded by the jungle. We run almost down into Newera Eliya, and then the elk turns up hill—a sure sign that he is about tired out—and soon we hear that he is at bay. We all rush up, but are too late, as the dogs have killed him by themselves. After looking at our fallen prey, we begin to think of a change of clothes (of which we are by this time much in need, being a good deal torn, and considerably scratched). Returning to the Club I got a delicious tub of ice-cold

water, and was soon ready for breakfast. On attempting to go out afterwards I felt as if both my legs were broken, and this pleasant sensation lasted for some days—the result of running too fast down a steep mountain side.

After a few days in Newera Eliya I descended to some of the coffee-growing districts, where I subsequently spent a good deal of time. I believe the general idea entertained in England of a coffee planter's life, is that he sits in a luxurious arm-chair, in a cool verandah, smoking a long pipe, and sipping some generous Eastern fluid, whilst countless relays of black slaves bring rare fruits, and beguile his time with dance and music. This idea is, however, hardly correct. The conscientious planter is the hardest-worked man that I know. He has always some two hundred men, women, and children to see after and to provide work for—not to mention settling their disputes, and providing for their medical

necessities. Besides this he must be a little of an engineer and architect, as roads, drains, bridges, and buildings have to be made ; and bad work is soon noticed and reported on unfavourably to his employers, by some of his kind and disinterested neighbours. To get through all his work, the planter must generally be out by six in the morning, when he musters the coolies and sends them to their different tasks—taking care that they take the necessary tools with them, as otherwise they would loiter until he chanced to come and find them. It will then take him till ten or eleven in the morning to see that all the work is properly started, and by that time he is glad to get in, to get a bath and breakfast. Probably sick coolies come at this time, and writing has to be done for the post ; and soon after twelve he starts again and revisits the working parties, all over the plantation. At four o'clock work (for the coolies) ceases, and then probably the planter has to

see more sick coolies, or settle disputes, or some other matter, for the coolies. In crop time the machinery has to be watched until it has done working, as a little carelessness might ruin it directly. When it is remembered that in many of the coffee districts the rains spread over eight months of the year, with a rainfall of more than four times the average English rainfall, and that when it is not raining the sun is generally unpleasantly hot, and moreover that most coffee plantations are on exceedingly steep hill sides, it will be seen that it is not quite the *dolce far niente* kind of existence which many a young man going out there to make his fortune fancies it to be. Occasionally, however, a day may be taken and devoted to sport. On several occasions I have gone with a party for the purpose of monkey shooting. A coolie goes with us to carry provisions and beer. We start off early in the morning up the mountains, till we get into the jungle, and stumble and

clamber through it all day, until it is time for tiffin, after which we generally commence our homeward route. The peculiarity of this sport, as far as I am acquainted with it, is, that the monkeys have invariably disappeared before we get to their haunts, although the place may have been swarming with them the day before. I have never yet seen a monkey when I had a gun with me, and so I gave up this kind of "sport," as the excitement of it was too great.

Snipe are to be got at certain seasons, by going down to the nearest paddy fields; and for those who do not mind wading all day through mud and water, under a broiling sun, plenty of this kind of sport is obtainable. The snipe are very numerous, and easier shot than the English Jack snipe. The best sport obtainable in the hills, however, is undoubtedly, to my mind at least, elephant shooting. I have met many men in Ceylon who differ from me

on this point, and say that they decidedly prefer snipe shooting, because, they say, there is much less chance of the snipe charging you, and even if he does, the consequences are less serious. I was once in the jungle, with thoughts by no means intent on elephants, and accompanied only by a greasy, podgy individual from the home counties—a man of a type fortunately uncommon amongst the coffee planters of Ceylon—when lo! we suddenly came on tracks of elephants not five minutes old. I at once felt to see what elephant cartridges I had with me, and found three, of which I offered my companion two, and suggested means for getting up to the elephant. He did not seem to enter into the fun of the thing at all, and said that he d-d-didn't know that he w-w-wanted to get up to them; and that man I verily believe made more noise than was absolutely necessary, on purpose to scare away the

game. I thought it evident that he was not one of those who admired this sport. It is exceedingly difficult to get near enough to the elephant to get a shot at him, as he is very wary, and will move off at the slightest noise, or sometimes will remain quite still in the thickest bit of jungle he can find, so that one can easily pass by him without finding him. It must be borne in mind that, in most jungle, twelve paces is the most that one can hope to be able to see to shoot, as the creepers and trees generally stand very thick. I have done a good many miles of rough walking in hopes of getting to them, but only once did I get near enough to shoot, and then unfortunately we did not bag him. It was on a deserted coffee plantation, with no cover but long grass, time about midnight, and the light of the moon a good deal obscured by clouds. We had seen two elephants some distance off, and were

trying to get round to them by some jungle on the borders of the plantation, when, just as we were approaching the corner of the jungle, we came on another elephant standing quietly in our path, about fifteen paces off. We had neither of us ever encountered a wild elephant before, and the feeling uppermost in both our minds was, that we wished we had stayed comfortably in bed, and left him to enjoy himself. We soon recovered ourselves sufficiently to recollect that to meet an elephant was precisely what we had come out for; and the elephant recovered from his astonishment at seeing us in his way, at such a time of night, sufficiently to think it desirable to make for the jungle. We just had time to give him a shot behind the ear (not a very good place for killing him), and he was crashing through the jungle at headlong speed, breaking fair sized trees in his course—

then came a more tremendous crash, and dead silence.

We made pretty sure that we had got him, but could not follow into the jungle, as it was pitch dark beneath the trees. To hear him crashing through the trees, and be uncertain if he would come back again on us, was worth far more than all the trouble I have ever taken to get at the elephants—a fox breaking cover in full view, and hounds and the whole field after him in a rush, is nothing to it. I suppose the element of danger is what makes this sport so much more exciting. As there was no more to be done then by following him, we returned to the bungalow, and went to bed for an hour or two, till dawn should enable us, as we hoped, to find the dead elephant. With dawn we started to look for him, but, alas, though we found unmistakable signs that he was hard hit—as he had evidently fallen down when we heard the great crash—we had to

give him up at last, after tracing him for two or three miles, as the tracks then became so numerous that we could not distinguish which was which.¹

A coffee planter generally has the advantage over the colonist in most other new countries, that he has a fairly comfortable bungalow to live in. It is almost a necessity that he should have one, in a moist tropical climate like the hill country of Ceylon. The native servant, however, as far as I have noticed him, is hardly the piece of perfection which the retired Anglo-Indian will generally tell you he is. The reason of this is partly that

¹ From a careful study of the habits of the elephant, as he exhibits them in the Zoo, I have arrived at the conclusion that the sport of elephant-hunting might be much simplified by the use of ginger-bread nuts. A native might be employed to decoy him with ginger-breads, and opportunity could be taken by the sportsman to shoot the elephant when intent on taking a gingerbread with his trunk. I am not aware that this experiment has yet been tried by any sportsman.

the best servants are often unwilling to come up-country, as the work is harder, and fewer servants are generally kept than in the towns. They are often quite incompetent to do anything in the way of cooking or household work, and are nearly always lazy, and frequently drunk. I knew one servant (or boy), a man of about forty, whose master told him on no account to get drunk on Christmas Eve, as he had guests coming to dinner on that night; but that he might get as drunk as he liked afterwards. The boy kept to his agreement, but prolonged the postponed orgie all through the next week; so his master had to dine out wherever he could during that time. The ideas of cleanliness which obtain in the Tamil servant's mind are hardly in strict accordance with our own. A story is told of a planter finding the "boy" straining the coffee through one of his (the planter's) stockings. On being remonstrated with, he deprecated his

master's wrath by saying, "Oh sir, please master not be angry, it not one clean stocking!"

At another bungalow I was once dining, when the boy (who had been accustomed to see finger glasses used after dinner, but could not find any in the house) bethought him of a happy expedient, and appeared with a washing basin, soap and water, and a towel, with which he proposed to make the round of the table.

The food up-country is very bad, especially the meat, which is only obtainable twice a week and which often consists of the worn out oxen which have made their last trip to the hills in carts, and the bread, which is made in Kandy, and is generally at least two days old when it reaches the plantation. Vegetables are scarce, and difficult to get, unless the planter is fortunate enough to possess a good garden. The drawback of only being able to obtain one's supplies twice a week, is that the

servant invariably gets into a routine of dishes for each day, getting worse and worse from "beef day," until "banyan day," as the day before the next "beef day," is called. Supplies in the shape of tinned provisions, flour, jams, and so forth, are to be obtained in most of the coffee districts, from the "engineers." I believe that selling groceries and oilman stores is a branch of civil engineering not carried on in England. The engineers of Ceylon are English firms, which supply the machinery for the plantations, but their great business seems to be sundries of all sorts, from jam to crockery and carving-knives. Beer (also frequently sold by the "engineer") is the almost universal drink up in the hills, and, taken in moderation, I believe it is the most wholesome thing to drink, as any active planter takes sufficient exercise to prevent its injuring his liver.

The great luxury in most planters' bunga-

lows is the bath. A stream is generally diverted into a pipe, and brought in at the top of the bath-room; the water is generally deliciously cool, as there is generally thick jungle near the tops of the hills, whence it comes; a bath under the spout, after a hot morning's walk, is truly delicious, and moreover about the worst thing for the liver possible.

When the Prince of Wales, on his Indian tour, visited Ceylon, I, as in duty bound as a loyal subject, went down to Kandy with a friend, to see the goings on there. We had first of all a ride of about thirty-five miles to do, and were somewhat stopped in our pace by having to wait for the coolies who were carrying our luggage, in a tin box for each of us, on their heads. We had at last the satisfaction of arriving at the railway terminus, just in time to see the last train moving off without us. After a few "cursory" remarks we came to the conclusion that we could not do better than drink the Prince's health at the

rest-house, where we were, and consult over what was to be done.

The remaining distance to Kandy was about twenty-five miles, and after some inquiry we found that we could get a trap to take us there, so we at once engaged it, and started as soon as we could. The vehicle was an American buggy, and a most excellent vehicle it was, but it had a trifling defect, as we soon found out ; namely, that the tire of one of the wheels came off about every two miles, and we then had to stop and search for a stone with which we fixed it on again. Our horse was probably one of the original pair which Noah took into the ark with him, and it did not appear to have had very much to eat since the deluge. Notwithstanding these drawbacks we did at length reach Kandy at about 9 P.M. and went to the Queen's Hotel. This hotel would, I should suppose, hold, at a pinch, about thirty people, but on this night there must have been at the least three

hundred in it, and lucky was any one who could get a seat on a table or anywhere. The servants said that they could not give us a bed, but that we could have a "shake down," so with this we had to be contented.

The scene in the principal rooms was not very orderly, as all the planters had come down for a spree, and much resembled sailors ashore for a day, after a long trip at sea.

About 10 P.M. the soda-water gave out, as Kandy only possesses a certain number of bottles, and this number was unequal to meet the demand, so there was nothing for it but to drink champagne neat—which did not conduce to the general sobriety. About one o'clock I sought for my "shake down" and found that a couch which had been promised to me had also been promised to several others, one of whom had already secured it, by going to bed and to sleep on it. At length the servants contrived a shake down for me, in the passage, which was made

of three chairs of different heights, the lowest at the head, and the highest in the middle, and on this I composed myself as best I could, and being very tired, I slept pretty well. Many of my friends who had seen me thus enjoying a virtuous repose, inquired kindly after my neck on the next morning, as they said that they thought I must have dislocated it, from the position in which I was lying.

The next morning I succeeded with some difficulty in getting a bath, and dressed in the bath-room. The meals were a regular scramble, and it was as well to secure any eatable, no matter what it might be, whenever the chance presented itself, as there was no knowing whether it would ever come again, or whether anything at all would come again. In the evening of this day, the ceremony of the Prince of Wales receiving the Kandian chiefs was to take place, and it was necessary to appear in full dress for the ceremony. We were at a loss to know where to dress, as there

was almost too great a crowd in the hotel for it to be possible. My friend and I were fortunate in meeting some friends who had taken a large loft over a stable, and brought their own provisions with them; and they invited us to dine and dress there, which we thankfully did, and left our boxes there too.

In due time we went off to see the reception, which was a rather dull affair, the principal thing to be remarked being the extraordinary dress of the Kandian chiefs, who appear to wear all the clothes that they are possessed of, about their persons—some unkind people have suggested that the reason for this practice may be, that they are afraid that the clothes would be stolen, if left at home unguarded. The ceremony concluded with the giving of the honour of K.C.M.G. to the Governor, and one or two lesser honours to other civil servants. After its conclusion we went out, and found that it was pouring with rain, in a manner truly

tropical, so the illuminations which were to have been lighted on the hills around, were not a success ; and the *pera hara*, or grand procession of temple elephants was rather a confused affair. Being utterly wet through, in our dress clothes, it occurred to us, at an early hour in the evening, that we would try to find our boxes which we had left where we dressed, and which contained all our things, including our night things. Off we went, still in the pouring rain, but as we found the street pitch dark, and all the buildings seemed very much alike, we were for a long time unable to find the house again. At length, after great difficulty, and wandering about for a long time, we did find the house and our boxes, but I could not find my keys, so I was no better off than before. We went back to the hotel, and I profited by the experience of the previous night, and went off early to secure a couch. It was absolutely necessary for me to have a sheet or something to sleep in, as I had not a

stitch of dry clothing on, and dare not sleep in my wet clothes. I went up stairs at once, and found a couch on the landing which was already appropriated by having a box on it; but this I at once removed, borrowed a native cloth from one of the servants, undressed and went to bed at once. I found I was none too soon, as two more claimants for the couch appeared almost immediately; but the servants declared that it was all right, and that I must not be disturbed, while I snored vigorously and listened to the arguments on both sides. After a short interval of comparative quiet I heard the owner of the box which had been placed on the couch approaching, apparently in the full confidence of having secured his bed beforehand, and I at once covered my head with the cloth, and snored vigorously again. He looked down at the couch, made several remarks, tried to wake me (in vain), and at last went off to find somewhere else to sleep. I asked him anxiously how and where he had

slept, on the next morning, and found that he had slept on a round ottoman in the billiard room. He did not seem pleased with me for having taken his couch, although I assured him that others would have had it, before he came, if I had not engaged it for him; and he said that if he had seen who it was he would have had me out of it—which shows that it is sometimes desirable not to be recognised by one's friends.

After this short visit to Kandy, my friend and I went back again to the coffee districts, whence we had come. The whole visit of the Prince was a great blessing to every one up-country, in furnishing a subject for conversation—topics for which are very limited among the plantations. As a man once observed, we had not even got the weather to talk about in Ceylon, as there never was a change except for the worse! This is, of course, not strictly true, but one is not easily thankful for a change from heavy rain to a broiling sun, or

vice versa. Coffee is the almost universal topic, with the kindred subjects of machinery, buildings, coolies, &c. People are also generally as busy about their neighbours' affairs as we find them to be in a small English country town. Universal hospitality still obtains up-country in Ceylon, although it is better to have a note or some sort of introduction to the man at whose bungalow one proposes to stop, as travellers have become rather more common of late years. It is by no means an uncommon thing for a perfect stranger to arrive at one's bungalow in the evening, fully expecting dinner and a bed, and possibly a change of clothes—and he is almost sure to be made welcome.

In Colombo a far different order of things prevails; nearly every one makes a point of dining in dress-clothes every evening, and not a few of the gentlemen who are so particular about this have very probably never possessed a dress-suit when in England. They are also

far more particular about dressing for the annual races held there than people would be in England. I was informed that it was "impossible" for me to attend the races without wearing a high hat ! I did not find the difficulty insurmountable, but went in a helmet—a much more suitable headgear, in my estimation, for the tropics ; but I was amused to find that my informant, who drove me there, and who, I believe, had been accustomed to guide the plough in Scotland before he came to Ceylon, lost me as soon as we got there, and professed himself to have been unable to find me until the races were over.

Leaving Colombo by coach for Galle again, I had to wait there several days before the P. and O. boat for Australia was ready to start. It is well to be in plenty of time at Galle, as the mail boats have a habit of going on as soon as they are ready, without caring whether it is before their regular time or not ; a quick passage to Australia being much

desired, as the Company get a premium on arrival there, for every day that they are before their time. At length the mail from England arrived, and the passengers for Australia were quickly transferred to the *Siam*, one of the best boats which the P. and O. Company possessed at that time.

It does not take us long to shake together, as I have found one or two former acquaintances on the boat; and I am soon thoroughly enjoying the freshness of the sea air, and the lovely moonlight tropical nights. A run of about twelve days brings us to Albany, or King George's Sound—the port of call for the mail steamers in Western Australia. This is my present destination, so I leave the steamer here, and look about me for means of getting from Albany to Perth, the capital, a distance of some 250 miles. I find that there is a small steamer, of something under two hundred tons, but, on inspecting her, I come to the conclusion that almost anything

would be preferable to her. She was originally built as a collier for English coast traffic, and does not appear, or smell, at all inviting, after leaving the spacious mail boat.¹ On inquiry, I find that a covered buggy with two horses has brought some passengers for the mail boat down to Albany from Perth, and I and another man, who also wants to get to Perth, engage it to take us, for the enormous sum of £25! The horses, however, will not be ready to start for two or three days, so we must remain in Albany, and amuse ourselves as best we can.

Albany is a rather pretty little place of some nine hundred inhabitants, and possesses the best harbour in Australia, with the exception of Sydney. Unfortunately it is surrounded by very barren and useless country, and for this reason it has never become an important place. It has, I should say, the best climate in Australia, and people say that you can add ten years to your life

¹ There is a better steamer on the coast now, 1879.

by living there ; but, if they know the place, they generally add that it is hardly worth while to do so. The principal amusement here, after one has walked up the hill to see the view, which is very fine, is to go out fishing in the harbour, when one generally gets about two whiting as the result of a day's sport. Having exhausted these amusements one has to fall back on billiards.

Very glad we were when it was at length announced that our horses would be ready to start on the next day. We laid in a plentiful supply of provisions (mostly tinned), which we purchased at what is locally known as the "Cockalorum," or otherwise the "Albany Co-operative Stores." We could not get much variety, but they assured us that they expected everything we asked for by the next mail steamer—Albany is, I believe, chronically expecting everything by the next steamer, but I do not think that it generally arrives. We were now prepared to take several *al fresco*

meals on the journey, if necessary; and putting the provisions, and as much of our luggage as the trap would hold, into it, we started off at a fairly early hour, about 11 A.M.

Let not those who have travelled on a good English coach road imagine that a road in Western Australia in any way resembles it. Some of the worst bits of this road have been improved, some years ago, by convict labour, but they are now generally falling into disrepair again, and the most appalling ruts are to be found in them. The rivers (which, by the way, I have never seen running) are bridged, and posts are put up along the side of the road, marked with a big R, and there you have about all that has been done to it. There are in all about thirty miles of deep sand to be traversed, and these sandy pieces tell very heavily on the horses. The resting-places are few, as water is scarce; and nearly all the inns, or accommodation houses, along the journey, are very dirty, and but poorly

supplied with provisions. Kangaroo are very plentiful along part of the road, and a sportsman carrying a gun with him should be able to shoot some, and thus ensure his being provided with fresh meat.

Much has been said and written of the enormous increase of stock in the Australian colonies; and it is indeed marvellous, when we recollect that they nearly all come from a few head of cattle and sheep, imported into New South Wales towards the end of the last century; but to any one travelling by this road the increase of fleas (supposing them also to have been imported, and not indigenous) appears far more wonderful! The sandy nature of a good part of the country through which this road passes, is doubtless conducive to their increase; and the fact that usually there are only passengers on the road about once in each month, going to or from the mail steamers, accounts for their exceedingly healthy appetite when they do get any one to feed on.

The latter part of the country through which we travelled is interspersed with a plant which is poisonous to sheep and cattle, and very injurious to horses (which, however, seldom eat it), and this has prevented stock from increasing as it should have done in this part of the country—and indeed it is found over the greater portion of the earlier settlements of this colony.

Five days of dusty road travelling—during which we generally stopped at some water hole in the middle of the day, took out our horses and fed them, while some one else lighted a fire and made tea, and another got out the provisions, and then we had our picnic, and a smoke, and then went on again till evening—and five nights, several of which were far from lonely on account of the afore mentioned fleas, brought us within sight of Perth. The first view of the city, approaching from this road, is imposing; the Roman Catholic cathedral standing out well

on the top of the hill. We cross the Swan—here a broad but shallow estuary—by a long causeway, and at last rattle up the main street of Perth, and alight at the hotel. The town is stragglingly built, but the streets are broad and straight, and an attempt has been made at planting trees at the sides of some of them. On the south side is the Swan River—a broad and beautiful piece of water, but only deep enough for light boats in many places: and the town stands on gently rising ground. It was originally, I believe, all sand, and it is still certainly sand close round it, as one very soon discovers when he gets off the made roads and paths.

Perth has about eight thousand inhabitants, and, personally, I have found them to be most hospitable to strangers. There is a handsome Town Hall—far larger than the town requires at present, or is likely to require for some time, as far as I can judge. The Government House is also a beautiful

building, but it stands too low for one to be able to get a good view of it from any point in the town—the only good view obtainable being from the river.

The society in Perth is better than would be found in an English town of the same size, as, being the seat of government, there is a large sprinkling of officials amongst the population. The inhabitants are much given to the reprehensible practice of giving dances in rooms of about fourteen feet square; and in the summer months it may easily be imagined that these rooms are by no means too cool. It is well to be guarded in making any remarks at all about the people one may meet there, as, ten to one, you will get the reply, "Oh, do you think so? she is my sister," or "That's my uncle," every one being more or less related throughout the colony. Every one takes a kind interest in their neighbours' minutest affairs, of course—but this is found to be the case in all small communities. Not-

withstanding these little drawbacks, I have managed to pass a good deal of pleasant time in Perth, and still look back with regret to the pleasant days I have spent there; and am sorry to think that I shall most likely never see it again.

My next movement from Perth, was a trip to Champion Bay, or Geraldton (in West Australia, they seem to make up for the paucity of their towns, by giving them two or more names each). I went by sea in the coasting steamer, as the land journey is long and tedious. It was a stormy-looking evening as we cast off from the jetty at Fremantle, and the skipper thought it better not to venture out, but to anchor all night in Fremantle harbour: where we remained close to land, but unable to get on shore, and were enabled to solve any doubts we had as to whether we were good sailors or not. The cabins on this steamer are about four feet six inches wide, and two feet six inches of this

is taken up by the bunks, so that the process of washing and dressing in the cabins is rather a difficult problem—as one has only room to put about one limb at a time into the cabin to wash it. With daylight we were off, and got to Champion Bay, after an uneventful voyage, the next morning.

A remarkable range of flat-topped hills forms the background, and the town itself is principally remarkable for its sand—shining white sand in all the streets, and on all the vacant building lots, sand on the shore, and sand heaped up by the wind on the foot-paths. Not a single tree is to be found in the place; and the sand hills at the back of the town have only been stopped from moving forward and overwhelming the place by having a sort of scrubby brush planted on them. You will naturally ask, Why on earth such a place was chosen for a town, and who is so deluded as to live here? It is the harbour for an agricultural district about ten

miles to the south of it, also for some lead mines, about thirty miles to the north of it, and it is too, the chief town of an extensive squatting district in the interior. The lead mines (township of Northampton) are connected with Geraldton by a railway, which is, I should think, unique in its kind. It runs right down the middle of the principal street, and although it seems to go through a fairly easy country, it makes the most astonishing ascents and descents, and the most impossible curves, which surely ever can have emanated from the brain of any sane human being. I have often seen the engine going in the middle of the train, and wondered why this was done ; until one day I travelled with the train, and found that at the bottom of the hills we stopped, and the engine then pushed up the first half, and returned to pull up the rest of the train. Altogether it does not promise to be a fast line, and I should recommend any one that is in a hurry to

get to the mines, to take a horse and go by road. Another peculiarity of the railroad is, that it has no signals on it anywhere! It has taken about four years to make this thirty miles of railroad—so that it will be some time before a perfect system of railroad is finished in this colony, if they only continue to construct at the present rate. When one does reach the mines, either by road or rail, they are found to be very rich in very pure lead, without much admixture of silver; and I have no doubt that when more capital is brought to work them, they will prove remunerative. I believe there are also some copper mines here, but they are not worked at present.

There is a very good hotel at Northampton, built with a view to the future development of the place—a good hotel is a thing to make a note of in West Australia, as they are scarce.

The Greenough Flats, (the agricultural district before mentioned) present a very

different appearance, according to the time of year one visits them, and the sort of season that it may be in that particular year. They consist of a good many miles of flat land, very rich, and bordered on either side by barren sand hills, and for any one who wishes to learn how not to farm, I do not know a better place. Manure is seldom applied, partly owing to the high cost of labour, and partly owing to laziness ; so little demand is there for manure, that I have known of people having to pay to have good stable manure carted off into the sea, at Geraldton. The general farming is dirty and slovenly, so that it is often hard to see what crop is growing in the fields, as it is so overgrown with weeds or wild oats that the proper crop is invisible. And yet, in a year when the rainfall is sufficient, and not too much, the "farmers" sometimes get an astonishing crop off this land. In the summer time, any one visiting the flats for the first

time, would probably take them for a very dusty tract of desert soil ; it is in fact hard to fancy a more desolate scene than they present—not a blade of grass, nor any other green thing, to be seen, and nothing but the bare dusty soil.

Geraldton is a busy town, for West Australia. It boasts of three branch banks, and two good hotels, and seems to consume more whisky than any other town of its size with which I am acquainted. It is said that the total of spirits consumed, as seen by the revenue returns, exceeds in a dry year, the amount of the rainfall (in gallons) for the town and district ; but I am not prepared to vouch for the correctness of this calculation. I can, however, personally speak to the fact of a great quantity of it being consumed. A system of road-making which I have seen in Geraldton is worth mentioning, as it may possibly commend itself to the Metropolitan Board of Works, being both noiseless

and not slippery—the two great desiderata for London street paving, I believe. The roadway is deep loose sand, and stable manure or seaweed is mixed with it to make it harder.

The advent of the rains made it possible for me to start on my journey towards the interior, up the recently discovered Murchison River, where I was anxious to see the country, and to form my own judgment as to whether it was likely to prove suitable for sheep farming or not. I procured two horses, one for £12, and the other for ten, and commenced seeing with how little baggage it would be possible to travel. A small valise, which I strapped on, together with my rug, in front of the saddle, sufficed to carry all I wanted for myself, viz., one flannel shirt, two clean pocket-handkerchiefs, one pair socks, one pair trousers, night-shirt and pyjamas, tooth brush, hair brushes, a cake of soap, and a towel. This was absolutely all, and I found it sufficient

for a trip which lasted nearly six weeks—indeed some of the articles, such as a tooth brush, were looked upon by experienced bushmen as superfluous luxuries. The second horse had to carry, in addition to his saddle, a pair of saddle bags, packed with our provisions, all in separate canvas bags—very neat at starting, but considerably mixed, and very dirty, before we had gone far; also a canvas bucket, which I found most useful for drawing water from wells, for the horses, &c.; and on the top of the lot, my sole companion, an aboriginal native boy; aged about eighteen, who was kindly lent to me by a friend for whom he generally worked. Our first day's journey, which is a fair type of every day's journey, was about thirty miles; nearly the whole of the distance being over a rather barren plain of deep sand, a strip of which runs at varying distances from the coast, almost the whole way from the N. W. Cape to the south of the colony. We got

to some shallow clay holes at dusk, which contained water, owing to the recent rains, and as it would soon be dark, we commenced our preparations to camp out. First of all the horses were unsaddled, and had hobbles put on their fore-legs, and then they were turned loose to get what food they could find for themselves. Then we collected wood for a fire, to last the night through, and got some water to boil in the "billy" or tin pot for tea. A camp gives people in England an idea of tents, but these I dispensed with on account of their weight, and all we had to do was to roll ourselves up in our rugs, and be as comfortable for the night as the circumstances permitted. Our tea consisted of bread and salt pork, which latter I was recommended to take, as it lasted better than other things. I found that it certainly did, as it was so very uninviting that I did not wish to eat much of it. We ate this sumptuous repast with the aid of our fingers and

a knife—as plates and forks are bulky, and really unnecessary. After tea I indulged in a pipe or two before the fire, and was interested in watching the native's preparations for going to bed. He took off all his clothes (to which he was not as yet thoroughly accustomed), put them under his head, then put several little fires at a distance of about a foot from him all round, and got into his blanket, and went to sleep forthwith. I remained smoking in solitude till about nine o'clock, and then rolled myself up in my blanket, as it began to rain. I did not get much sleep, as the ground was hard and stony, and the rain continued through the greater part of the night. As soon as the day began to break the next morning, I roused the boy, who went to look for the horses, while I proceeded to make tea, and then to perform what little toilet operations were possible. By the time I had finished, the boy had returned with the horses, and

the tea was made ; so we had breakfast—consisting of course of the same fare as we had had the night before—and saddled up and started again by about half past six ; a good early start being a great thing, as one never knows what accidents may happen in the course of the day, and it is generally necessary to reach one's intended destination at night, or go without water.

This day's journey was about five-and-thirty miles, and we did not stop long in the middle of the day for dinner, as there was no grass at all for the horses to eat, and so it was not worth while to turn them loose. We got, in good time in the evening, to a large pool of water, salt as the sea ; but near it we found a well of fresh water, and a fair supply of grass for the horses, so we camped there. Our supply of bread was finished, so a damper had to be made. But as I did not know at all how to set about it, I told the native boy to do it, and was much pleased

to see that he washed his hands before kneading the dough. I am told that this is a pitch of civilisation to which they seldom attain, and he must have done it out of compliment to, or in pity for, my evident ignorance of the ways of the bush. Our kneading-board was an old flour-sack and the damper is made by putting sufficient flour on it for the cake, scooping out a hole in the middle, pouring in water, taking care not to pour in too much, and then (in the case of a white man) kneading it till you are black in the face. The fire should meanwhile be burning well; and the dough is then shaped into a round flat cake, placed on the hot ashes and covered with more. If the fire is good, it should be ready in about half an hour, and when eaten hot it is as delicious and unwholesomely heavy a kind of bread as one could wish for. The more it is kneaded and the hotter the fire, the lighter is the damper. By dusk our tea was ready, and we were ready to pass much

the same sort of night as before. I am happy to say that our beds were a little more comfortable than on the preceding night, as there were no stones. We began our next day's journey betimes, and after riding about forty-eight miles straight away, we arrived at the out-station of a friend of mine, where I intended to rest the horses for a day or two. Our road was boggy in many places, owing to the heavy rain which had fallen. I was fortunate to find my friend at the station, where he was getting things in order for his shearing, which was to commence in about ten days time. This night I thoroughly enjoyed the luxury of a bed, and a roof over my head, especially as it rained hard again all night. On the next day I employed the native in cleaning my stirrups and bits, as I was determined to keep them tolerably bright, although I was assured it was utterly impossible to keep them clean in the bush. I found it quite possible, by putting the native to clean

them on off days, when I was not travelling, and I thus succeeded in bringing leather and steel back in as good order as I had started with them. A little castor-oil rubbed into the saddle and reins preserves them wonderfully.

The house at the station was a thatched and mud-floored two-roomed dwelling, in which no attempt at comfort had been made, although the present owners had been living in it several years. People who live in the far-away bush seem soon to give up all idea of comfort, and not to care for it any more—this is perhaps fortunate, as there is very little comfort obtainable, however much one may hanker after it. While on the subject of comfort, I wish to enter my protest against that fearful imposition generally found at back stations in West Australia, viz., the bush cook. He is generally chosen for cook as being totally unfit for anything else, and he can often make good bread ; but as far as I

know that is the only merit he possesses, and his one object in life seems to be to make whole sheep into chops, and to give them as unsavoury an appearance and taste as possible, and never to serve them up hot, if he can by any means avoid it: if there is anything besides chops he generally heaps it up on the same dish as the chops are on, and thus contrives to make the whole look uninviting.

The view from the station was desolate in the extreme, the ground being quite bare of grass, when I was there, and nearly dead flat and thinly covered with scrub. There were a good many natives about here, who do odd jobs at the station, and get food and an occasional old garment in return. My friend also employs a good many of them for scouring the wool, at the shearing season, and they are found to work pretty well, when properly supervised.

After a day or two's rest here I went on forty-five miles to another out-station belong-

ing to the same man. Here there is no house, but a stone store, for containing the miscellaneous supplies required on a station, and here also is the Post Office. It consists of a bark hut, with sides sloping to the ground, like a tent, and is about seven feet high at the ridge pole. The postman, who is also cook here, has decorated the inside of it with old pictures from the illustrated papers, and is very proud of his dwelling. I was pleased to find that he was a better cook than the generality of his kind, and soon after taking a good tea I was glad to turn in, and slept well on a rough stone floor, amongst the stores.

Early on the following morning I started off to find the overseer of the station, who was to lend me another horse for the native and pack to go on, and to further provide me with necessaries. I had expected to find him at the station, but found that he had gone off on business, and was told that my

best chance of finding him would be to follow him, as there was no knowing when he might return. I went about thirty miles to a sheep-camp where I expected to find him, and found that he had returned to the station! There was nothing for it but to go back too, so back we went. It soon got dark, and I was really astonished to see how well the native found his way, as we had no track to follow. He did not keep a straight course, but eventually brought me out into the road by which we had come in the morning, within half a mile of the station. I was very glad to find the overseer here at last, and not sorry to dismount, after a fruitless ride of fourteen hours.

I casually observed that I thought I would rest on the next day, especially as it was Sunday; on which they informed me that to-day was Sunday! and much to my astonishment I found that they were quite right, and that I had managed to get a day

out in my reckoning—a thing which it is very easy to do if one is not very careful always to put down the events of each day on the evening of the day, and not to let it wait for the morning, when it is easily forgotten.

After waiting a day to get horses I proceeded for the next station, belonging still to the same man, a journey of four days' duration—the only change in my mode of living from the hitherto described journeys being that the flour which I took with me from the station was full of weevils in every form of development, and this did not make the damper by any means nicer—although they ornamented it, much as currants in a cake. I found on my return that I had taken some old flour, by mistake, which was only intended to be given to the natives. I arrived at the cattle station, which consisted of a store only, and found it shut up, and the overseer away, and also found a crowd of natives there, pretty wild ones these, clad for the most

part in nothing at all, both men and women—the effect is peculiar until one gets accustomed to it. Fortunately for me the overseer was not very far off, and soon came, on being told by a native messenger that a white man had arrived. He cooked a very fair dinner for us, his kitchen being the open air, as usual; and after tea we smoked a pipe, and I gave him the news, which of course he was not very well posted up in, living by himself so far away in the bush. A couple of temporary beds were rigged up in the store, so we slept well. I took out my revolver here, as I was getting amongst the wild tribes of natives, and found a screw wrong, which I had very great difficulty in repairing, without any proper tools for the purpose—a crowd of natives were looking in at the door and window, and took great interest in my proceedings, so I was glad to be able to show them the pistol in working order again, after a time. Going outside

the store in the morning to clean my teeth, the natives were much amused at the operation, and all began to imitate me with bits of stick, &c., like so many monkeys. As several white men had been here before, I fear that they must have neglected their toilet operations while in the bush, as it was evidently new to the natives. Being very dusty I went down to the pool, near by, to have a bathe, and was soon followed by a crowd of natives, much to my disgust; however I was far too dusty to be modest, and so I bathed, much to their edification apparently.

After breakfast a man came over from the next station, belonging to some people newly over from Victoria, and persuaded us to go back with him. We started in the afternoon, and having about five-and-twenty miles to do, we rode fast. I was somewhat amused at one of my companions wondering what an "English gentleman"

would think of such a ride. I had always regarded myself as an "English gentleman," but I evidently did not strike them in the same light. It was explained to me afterwards that this was complimentary, as they evidently took me for a colonial—and a colonial is well known out here to be immeasurably superior to a mere Englishman. When we arrived at the station here, we found it to be a mere camp, as the owners had only recently arrived, and had not yet permanently decided where to fix their home station. Two huts made of bushes, and a couple of tents ranged round an inclosed space, in the centre of which was the fire, made up the camp, and very picturesque it looked at night.

There were lots of natives about, but they were not allowed to come inside the inclosure, both for fear they might steal things, and also because the aboriginal native, when taken in quantities, is anything but savoury. There

were a lot of whites at the camp here, and among them I was pleased to find an old schoolfellow from England. We passed the evening playing whist, the stakes being sticks of tobacco. On the next day I assisted in the operation of shoeing a horse, without the usual tools, and in very amateur style. We pared his hoofs by making him place his foot on a board, and then using a cold chisel to them; when this was done the nails had to be driven in, and I never before knew how difficult a job it was to drive horse-shoe nails straight. After much trouble we got about three nails per shoe to stick, and the job was pronounced finished, as we had no more nails left.

Another ride of forty miles brought me to the last station of all, on the Murchison River, also belonging to a company from Victoria. Here I met friends whom I had known before, and much astonished they were to see me. The accommodation here consisted of a tent,

in which all the stores were kept, and the owners were not in particularly bright spirits as they had had continuous drought ever since their arrival here, and that great pest of the sheep farmer, "scab," had just broken out into the bargain. I stayed a day or two here to rest, and then pushed on to see the country beyond, of which I had heard great things; but it did not come up to my expectations, and I fancy it will be a long time before it will pay for sheep, as the distance to the port is so great, something like six hundred miles. For cattle I think it might pay, but as yet the West Australian market for cattle is very limited.

On this journey I had for a guide a native whose costume consisted in having his beard done up in a little ball at the bottom and painted red, and his wife who accompanied him had the same costume, except that as she had no beard, she could not wear this embellishment. They both seemed pretty active,

doing their thirty miles or so per day without any apparent inconvenience.

I had the pleasure of traversing what is known as a macadamised plain for about ten miles, one evening, as on my arrival at a place where there was supposed to be permanent water, and where I intended to stop, the stream was found to be dry. A macadamised plain is perfectly barren ground, thickly strewn with loose stones of quartz or granite, of about the size that one generally sees them at the sides of the roads in England when they are placed there ready for breaking. For a horse with shoes on it is bad enough to cross, and for a horse without shoes it is simply fearful. Following up the river I came to a lot of pools said by the natives to be permanent water, and scattered plots of the "salt bush" so celebrated as feed for sheep in New South Wales. But except the salt bush there was very little feed of any kind to be seen, on account of the drought, which had probably lasted here some

time. On the day when I was at the furthest point of my journey I met two wild tribes, consisting of about a dozen people each, and one of these tribes I believe had never seen a white man before. They were civil enough, and showed me the water all about. I did not quite like their company, as they were all armed with spears, and followed me all day so that they could easily have speared me in the back, if so disposed. About a month after my departure there was a row between them and the whites, in which several natives were killed, so that I can consider myself fortunate in not having roused their ire, or that the row had not taken place before, as they would undoubtedly have revenged themselves on me if it had.

After four days' absence I returned to the Company's station, and after a few days' rest for my horse, during which I had some excellent duck-shooting, I set off on my return journey to Champion Bay. I had a

white companion part of the way down, which made the journey considerably pleasanter, and the whole country was looking green after the recent rains. At my friend's station, where I had left him preparing for shearing, I found the business going on in full swing, and I stopped a few days to see the shearing and also to try my hand at it myself. Another party going up to explore the country met us here, but I did not hear that they were more successful than I have been. An uneventful journey of three days brought me down to Champion Bay, after an absence of forty-one days, during which I had traversed some twelve hundred miles with the same horse. I sent him out to graze and recover his strength and fat in a paddock near, and in a month's time he was fat and fit for another journey of about three hundred miles up the country in another direction. After both journeys were over I sold him for the same price as I had given for him.

The announcement that the coasting steamer was about to make a trip to the North West settlement decided me to go there, and see for myself what sort of a climate it was, and whether there was likely to be an opening there for sheep or cattle farming. I believe that this was the first occasion of a steamer visiting that settlement. We proceeded north from Champion Bay to Shark's Bay, and endeavoured to get in through what is known as the false passage, to the south of Dirk Hartog's Island. We had not gone far, however, before we found ourselves hard and fast on a sand-bank. We made great efforts to get off, but were at last compelled to wait and try again at midnight, when it would be high water. I was forcibly reminded by the general bearing of our skipper of the words of the poet Longfellow (slightly altered):—

“He stood on the bridge at midnight,
While the clock was striking the hour, * * *
And the feelings that came o'er him
Seemed greater than he could bear.”

All our efforts to get off were again fruitless, but at twelve o'clock the next day we managed to get off again, by working the screw first backwards and then forwards several times, so as to loosen the sand about the ship. Five days more steaming brought us to Cossack, the port for the North West settlement. It is situated at the mouth of a river, in which there is a tide of about twenty feet, and the steamer took advantage of this tide to beach and have her bottom scraped and painted. The town of Cossack is not inviting to look at, consisting of a few miserable houses, made of weather-boards and iron, which have been apparently dropped down at haphazard on the sand. The place which is dignified with the name of a "hotel" is one of the most primitive houses of entertainment that I have ever seen. For conveniences, it contains one tin wash-hand stand, and one has generally to fetch the water for oneself; and in lieu of bedrooms, mattresses and blankets are brought

out at night and laid in the verandah. An occasional drunken man stumbling over one during the night does not conduce to sleep. The heat here is most intense, and no one thinks of wearing a coat at any time. Meals are served for all together, and the effect of every one sitting down to dinner in their shirts is rather striking at first, until one gets accustomed to it. I found it absolutely necessary to bathe in the creek, so great was the heat and so little the accommodation for washing in the house ; but I confess that my pleasure in bathing would have been greater had I not known that the creek was infested by sharks. We always kept in shallow water, and made as much noise as possible, and were never molested by them. Finding a friend enjoying a siesta one afternoon, I got all the available blankets in the hotel, and covered him up without waking him, but such is the ingratitude of human nature, that on his waking about an hour afterwards, he did not even

thank me for the beautiful Turkish bath that I had improvised for him. Roebourne, the chief town of the settlement, is about four miles in a direct line from Cossack, but about seven by road.

We soon found our way up to the town, and I was much pleased to find a really comfortable hotel. The best part of it was only just finished, and was looking nice, as everything was new. The landlord was an immigrant and, together with his father, who was a more recent importation, positively revelled in freedom from good manners, and took the greatest care never to address one as "sir," but usually addressed me and others by our surnames alone. I did not at all like this cheek on their part at first, but on reflection I thought it better to take no notice of it, as they would undoubtedly have told me to go elsewhere, if I were not satisfied with them; and there was nowhere else to go to. Vegetables do not grow here, but at the hotel we

had the luxury of tinned ones daily, and potatoes had come up by the steamer. The meat, especially the beef, is very good, but it has to be eaten rather fresh on account of the intense heat here. The general appearance of the place was barren in the extreme, as they were suffering from a drought of eighteen months' duration. The plains about here are however covered with a coarse kind of grass, which is capable of withstanding such a drought, and does not crumble up and disappear, as it would do in most other parts of Australia, but remains on the ground until it is eaten off.

We waited for a few days at Roebourne, until horses were sent in from a neighbouring station to take us out there. We went at night, on account of the great heat, and only stopped for about three hours before day-break, at a well, to rest our horses. It was high time for breakfast when we arrived, and we found our hospitable host expecting

us. On this station was the only good house in the settlement; but a house is not much use here, as people generally prefer to sleep in the verandah or outside altogether, on account of the heat. The general character of the country here is stony grassy plains, with very steep rocky mountains rising abruptly out of them, and often running for many miles in chains that it is almost impossible to cross.

We went on again after a few days to another station where we had been invited to keep Christmas. The house had two small rooms lighted by the door and by unglazed windows, and had a thatched roof and stone floor; there was no verandah, so we slept outside. The weather had been looking threatening for some days, and on Christmas Day we got a hurricane and a good deal of rain. We had to close the shutters of the windows and the door to keep the rain out, and so we passed the

day in almost darkness, and it was found nearly impossible to get any dinner cooked, and when cooked, brought from the kitchen to the house, on account of the rain and wind. We had a dinner of cold mutton and rice—which is decidedly the poorest Christmas fare it has ever been my lot to eat. Our host, however, was Scotch, so we finished up the day with some good whisky, and were as comfortable as the circumstances permitted. Every one was of course in high spirits at getting the rain at last, as things were beginning to look serious on account of the prolonged drought.

The immediate effect of the rain was to render the country so boggy that it was scarcely passable for wheeled vehicles, or even horses; although the weather was a little cooler according to the thermometer, the heat became more oppressive, on account of the large amount of moisture suspended in the air. I managed to return to Roebourne on the last day of the

year, and found every one energetically preparing for a dance, and athletic sports, and a cricket-match, to celebrate the coming in of the new year. A serious calamity had happened here; the water on which the cattle round the town mainly depended for water had become salt, as the hurricane had been so violent as to drive the sea up into it. Another, and a still more violent hurricane took place on the twenty-fifth of January, and this was accompanied with much more rain than the former one had been, so the salt water got cleared out of the hole again, otherwise the consequences might have been very serious.

I was not at Roebourne during "the season," that is to say, when the people employed in the mother-of-pearl fisheries were there. I am told that it is then the roughest place in Australia, not even yielding the palm to a new rush to gold diggings. The pearl-fishers live a very hard and uncomfort-

able life all the time that they are out in their ships—generally about seven months each year; and many of them make a great deal of money, which it seems to be their one object to spend in drink as soon as they possibly can: many of them are most successful in their efforts. I am told that if a man wants to “shout,” i.e. stand glasses round, he orders a dozen bottles of the liquor, whatever it may be, whisky, or rum, or brandy, and, as it is necessary for this to be finished at once, and each one of the party feels it his duty to shout also before the meeting is adjourned, the temperance cause is hardly flourishing here. A favourite drink is a “square and jump up,” an order which would probably nonplus a London club waiter. It means Hollands or square gin (so called from its being in square bottles), and some lemon kali to make an effervescing drink of it, soda being usually unobtainable in this district. Coats are

utterly unknown here, except for very great occasions, and a flannel shirt, open at the neck, is the almost universal costume. I was much amused by watching the preparations for a wedding, which was to have taken place while I was there. The intending bridegroom and his friends went to the store to get swell clothes for the occasion, and the things which seemed to strike their fancy most were some white shirts. These they bought, and proceeded to put them on, outside their other garments; some blue ribbon, put on their hats and as shoulder bands, completed the costume; the bride, a barmaid at an inn, was meanwhile anxiously awaiting their arrival. A drink, however, was proposed by one of the men, to keep up the bridegroom's spirits, and so they adjourned to drink, and continued at it for so long, that when they at last did arrive to claim the bride, they were so far gone that she declined to have anything more

to say to them, and so the wedding never took place after all.

A very few days after the rain had fallen made a marked difference in the appearance of the country ; grass began to grow everywhere, on what had formerly looked barren and desolate land, and even the streets of the town (there being very little traffic in them) soon were covered with verdure. The heat was most oppressive, the thermometer generally registering 110° in the shade during the day, and scarcely going below 100° at night. Flies and mosquitoes seemed to have been brought to life also by the damp, and they rendered one's life a burden by their unremitting attentions. Towards the end of the month of January the weather again began to look threatening, and on the 24th the barometer told us clearly to expect a hurricane. Towards evening it blew hard. A friend and I sat down to 'play *écarté*, as we did

not wish to go to bed until we saw what the weather was going to be, and we had just determined to stop, and go and see how people were getting on in the other house, when down came the ceiling (made of white-washed cloth) of the large room in which we were sitting.

We put away all the things which were breakable which we could find, and then got over to the other house. It was pitch dark and pouring with rain, and blowing so hard that we had great difficulty in getting across. Three of us then got a carriage lamp, and went up the town, to see if any assistance was wanted.

We had to hold arms, in order to keep on our legs, and, during the gusts of wind, it was absolutely impossible to make head-way against it. Every one was in fear and trembling, with everything as much closed and battened down as possible, but, as yet, no great damage had been done. We

returned to the hotel, and I did not venture out again myself, as I found, that, being a very light weight, I was an encumbrance rather than an assistance to the others. After a time they went out again, and this time returned with a small family of fugitives, half of whose house was blown away, and the other half remained in a dangerous condition.

A short time after the rescuing party had gone out again, the roof of the room in which we were assembled was blown away, and the wind at once extinguished the lamp. We groped our way into the next room, which was smaller, and fortunately its roof remained tolerably sound during the rest of the night. The windows, however, blew in several times, and we had enough to do barricading them up so as to prevent the wind getting in and doing still more damage. We were all wet through, and towards morning there were about twenty of us

gathered in a small room, children sleeping on the billiard table, and every one generally uncomfortable. The barometer went down about an inch and a half during the gale, and at its height I observed the hand to be vibrating with each gust of wind as much as a tenth.

We were all very glad to see the dawn, though the scene it presented to our view was desolate enough. The whole plain was covered with water, and what had yesterday been the dry bed of a river, interspersed with water holes, was now a torrent some four hundred yards wide, rushing down towards the sea, and taking trees and all sorts of wreckage with it.

As the wind had abated a little, I, in company with several others, went out to look at the damage done, and we found that the magistrate's house was almost the only one which had escaped without damage, and this, too, was full of refugees.

On going back to the hotel we found them engaged in making a fire in the verandah, on the lee side of the house, and cooking some chops; these we were very glad to get and to eat them with our fingers, accompanied by some bread which was soaked through and through with the rain. Fortunately there were no casualties during this storm, to human life, although any one who was out must have been in extreme danger from the pieces of iron roofing and other wreckage which were blown about in all directions.

I had often wished to see a real cyclone before this, but I am fully satisfied now, and have not the slightest wish to see another. I was relieved to find that my bedroom, which was on the lee side of the other part of the hotel, had escaped unhurt, and even remained comparatively dry, although the main roof of the building had gone. We went to collect the iron from the

roof, and found it about half a mile away in a small valley, where it had got blown to by the force of the wind. Most of it was twisted and broken so as to be of no use, but we were able to use some of it again to cover-in the dining-room.

About a week after the hurricane, an exploring party under the leadership of Mr. A. Forrest arrived, having safely weathered the storm in a little vessel of about forty tons. They completely filled up the hotel for a short time, but were soon dispersed all over the country, collecting horses for the journey. They crossed to the overland telegraph line in a north-westerly direction, and report that they have been successful in finding a great deal of fine, well-watered grass land.

About the middle of February I took a passage in a small coasting schooner of forty-eight tons, to go down to Champion Bay again, calling on the way at the pearling

fleet, wherever they might be. Another vessel arrived on the same day that I was leaving, and I was fortunate in being able to get some bottled beer from her, to use on the voyage down. Beer was not to be obtained in Roebourne or Cossack during the last few weeks of my stay there—in fact about the only thing to be got to drink was a “gin and jump up,” a drink which I have previously explained.

A week of light and variable winds, during which the weather was suffocatingly hot, brought us to Exmouth Gulf, and we found the pearling fleet anchored here and hard at work. A more rotten set of ill-found, dirty little boats, it would be hard to find anywhere in the world. They are most of them about fourteen to twenty tons, but some are larger. Whatever their size, they are crowded with aboriginal natives as full as they can hold, and at the time when I was there every available corner was

crammed with the valuable but ill-smelling mother-of-pearl shell. The white men who are on these boats, and to whom they belong, live very little, if any, better than their black labourers. There had been no meat obtainable in the fleet for some time before our arrival, and we only brought them a few miserable sheep, which would not last them more than a couple of days. At most times they live entirely on damper and tea, with an occasional variation in the way of turtle or turtles' eggs, when they are fortunate enough to come across them. Every vessel is provided with a number of small open boats, and from these the natives dive for the shells. There are generally five or six boats in a long line astern of the ship, and the diver, if carried back by the current, may start from the first boat and come up near the last.

The principal object of the fishery here is to get mother-of-pearl shell, but pearls of

considerable size and value are often found on opening the shell, and these often amount in value to three or four hundred pounds during the season. The shells themselves vary from £100 to £250 per ton, and a ton is only about what is contained in four hogshead barrels. We stayed two or three days here, getting shell on board, which was to go down to Fremantle, and thence to be shipped to England. There are lots of sharks all about on this coast, yet the native divers do not seem to fear them at all; but there are also water-snakes, about six feet long, which they do fear; they do not bite, but sometimes twist round them in an unpleasant and rather dangerous manner.

After getting our cargo on board, we had to wait some time for a wind, and at last got a light breeze, which took us round the N.W. Cape. Just as we got inside the islands which form one side of Shark's

Bay, a few days later, it blew a gale, and carried away our bowsprit. We had to run before the wind, and were fortunate in finding a little sheltered cove, with just water enough for us, in which we were able to lie-to and repair. After a day employed thus, we again had very light winds, and it took us two more days to get to the camp of the pearl fishers, on the mainland side of the bay. The fishery here is for pearls, the shells being of little value (indeed, until late years they were actually thrown away), and it is conducted in open boats, or yawls, of about three to seven tons. The pearls are got by dragging a sort of rake and net along the bottom, and not by diving. The men employed in this business live in tents on shore, pitched amongst some desolate and arid sand-hills, and having nothing but very brackish water to drink. They seldom are out for more than two days at a time in the boats. It must be a most comfortless

life, and at the present time it hardly does more than pay expenses, as the pearls found are of inferior quality, and generally of small size: it seems a wonder to me that any one is found to engage in this pursuit.

On board our schooner I had the misfortune to break my tooth-brush, about the second day out, and on my mentioning this to our skipper he said that he thought he had one somewhere, and in the course of the day he kindly produced it, and offered it to me. I thanked him profusely, as in duty bound, but was unable to use it, as it was unmistakably a second-hand article, and I have a decided prejudice in favour of a new one.

We had a native prisoner on board, going down for his trial at Perth, and he was secured on deck with a chain, to prevent his escape, during the whole voyage,—rather rough treatment for a prisoner going to take his trial I thought; but it would

have been impossible to keep him without the chain, as he would have swum ashore whenever we were near land.

The cockroaches on board our boat were exceedingly tame and large; they are most domestic in their habits, and seem fond of the society of man, generally coming into one's bed at night.

Leaving the pearlers, we crossed over to Dirk Hartog's Island, which is now occupied as a sheep station, and is about as desolate looking a place as I have ever seen. It seems to consist entirely of loose sand, and it is rather hard to see what the sheep can find to feed on, unless they have been educated to eat sand. There is no good water on the island, the best being very salt, but just drinkable when made into tea. I went ashore here, as I knew the proprietor of the run, and passed a pleasant evening with him and his wife. I think they were very glad to see any acquaintance

in so out-of-the-way a spot. We took several of the pearlers down as passengers from here, and on our getting out of the bay I believe I was the only person on board who felt well enough to enjoy my meals, as we got at once into a chopping sea. We had contrary winds all the way down, but at last reached Perth and civilisation again.

From Perth to Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, is a voyage of some 1,500 miles, pleasant enough at most times of the year, but there is often rough weather off the south-west cape of Australia (Cape Lewin) and along the south coast. Adelaide is as yet a very unfinished-looking town, but its public buildings, and some of its banks, are as fine or finer than those in Melbourne. A wise prevision has kept a belt of land in the middle of the town, along the river Torrens, as public land, and it will eventually be laid out in gardens

and beautified. The Botanical Gardens are already occupying a part of it, and are most beautifully and tastefully arranged.

There is a good deal of vine cultivation around the town, and efforts are being made to produce good and palatable wines, but as yet I cannot say that they are very successful. A good many vigneronns from Germany and France have been induced to come here, and probably, ere long, we shall have a good wine exported from hence to England: It is unquestionable that the grapes are very fine, and succeed well; all that is wanted is, probably, a better understanding of how to manufacture the wine, and experience will probably teach them this.

Rich copper mines have been worked at a great profit at no great distance from the town, and have contributed greatly to its prosperity. Gold has never been found in payable quantities in South Australia

(except in the northern territory), and so the colony has not advanced with the same giant strides as its eastern neighbours; but there appears to be much steady prosperity in the colony, and it probably has a great future before it. There are plenty of very good coasting steamers running between Adelaide and Melbourne, and especially the *Victoria* and *South Australian*, two new and fast steamers, are exceedingly comfortable. The journey can also be made by coach, and going this way one passes some beautiful scenery, and also drives through a great part of the most fertile part of Victoria.

Melbourne, "the metropolis of the southern hemisphere," as it is grandiloquently called, is approached from the sea through Hobson's Bay, a large land-locked bay, with only about two miles across at the opening. The coasting steamers go up the river Yarra, and land one at quays quite in the

town. The Yarra is a narrow, sluggish, dirty stream, and is lined on both sides, for a good part of the way up to Melbourne, with fellmongers' establishments, which produce about the most horrible smells that it is possible to imagine. I had the misfortune to run aground opposite to one of them, and so was enabled thoroughly to enjoy the smell which welcomed me to Victoria. The town is laid out a mile square, and stands upon two slight hills; the streets are broad and straight, and the public buildings, banks, and insurance offices, form striking and handsome features in the principal streets. It is a solid and well-built-looking town, and it seems hard to believe that it is only about thirty years old. Numerous suburbs now join the original town, and the population is I believe about 280,000, or rather larger than Dublin.

There are many nicely laid-out parks and

gardens in Melbourne, which have been reserved as public property from the commencement—as the trees grow bigger, they will be really beautiful, and even now they form a very pleasant retreat from the dust of the town. Melbourne is about as dusty a place as is to be found anywhere; the streets are watered frequently with hydrants, but the sun soon dries them up again, and the dust blows in clouds: in the suburbs, where the roads are not so well cared for, the streets are proportionately more dusty. The whole of Melbourne proper is drained by open gutters at the side of the streets, and all the water from both hills is conducted into the lowest street, about the centre of the town—the result of this is, that in a heavy fall of rain this bottom street is flooded, and sometimes actually impassable, and I have known of a case of a boy being drowned in the street! It is very hard to see what can be done to

remedy this state of affairs, as, owing to the conformation of the ground, it is very difficult to carry off the water in any other way ; but I hope ere long some means will be found of bettering it.

The hotels in Melbourne are fairly good, and decidedly cheap, about 10s. 6*d.* a day being the usual charge for board and lodging. The town also boasts of several clubs ; the Melbourne Club is the best, and is a fine and commodious building, and everything in it is as well managed as in a good London club. There are three theatres, with performances of varying merit, and generally an opera is attempted at one of them during a part of the year. One or two good singers are induced to come from Europe or America, but the tail of the opera company is generally bad ; and they are too ambitious in the pieces which they attempt to produce. Shakespeare is also frequently acted, and very popular, but I

should fancy that the same fault is to be found with this as with the opera. There is a magnificent organ by Hill in the Town Hall and performances are given on this about once a week at the moderate charge of sixpence for admission.

The public library and museum is a deservedly popular place of resort, and one may there see people of all classes engaged in studying more or less abstruse works. Altogether Melbourne is a town well worthy of a visit, but it is not a London or a Paris, a fact of which its inhabitants stand in need of being constantly reminded. I took a journey out westward to Colac, to see a sale of short-horns and other cattle there: the journey was partly by rail, and partly by coach. A "Cobbs coach" is an institution peculiar to this country and to America (from whence I believe it was imported). The under carriage is immensely strong and

rather clumsy, and the body of the coach is hung from leather springs: it is found that this sort of vehicle will take one over the rough tracks of the country with the maximum of comfort and the minimum of danger. They are made of various sizes—the one on which I went took about fifty-six of us, and our luggage. We had six horses, two and two, driven from the box, without postilions.

We rattled off with this team and eventually got to Colac, very hot and dusty, and found the place very crowded, as the sale of cattle brings an immense number of people here. The sale took place on the next day, in a circular yard, surrounded by raised and covered seats, and a greater number of really finely-bred cattle it would be difficult to meet with anywhere. There are two distinct herds of cattle on the station, one of shorthorns and the other of Herefords. The greatest care has been

taken in importing some of the best blood from England, and the result is encouraging, for I believe the annual sale of surplus stock from the station exceeds twenty thousand pounds.

Leaving Colac I went further west by coach, to see a friend of mine, who had a station there. I stayed some days with him, and took part in various station pursuits, such as driving cattle, &c. We went out one day to shoot some wild geese—our way of approaching them being in a small and leaky punt across a lake. My friend took one end of the punt, and I the other, and as he was much the heavier of the two he got all the water at his end of the boat, and I was able to enjoy the cruise and to chaff him at the same time. We got to an island in the middle of the lake, and succeeded in bagging two birds. Another day we drove five and twenty miles to a cricket match at Coleraine, and drove back again afterwards. The horses

went about ten miles an hour all the way, and did not seem to be in the least distressed by the journey, although they were grass fed, and not kept in the stable. Horses undoubtedly can do more work in Australia than they can in England.

Many experiments have been made in Victoria in acclimatising animals, birds, and plants; far the most successful seem to be thistles and rabbits. The thistles, in many parts, form a thick cover some four feet high, through which it is difficult to walk, besides being decidedly unpleasant on account of the prickles; and the rabbits have in places increased to such an extent as to leave hardly any pasture for the sheep to eat. On a station where they were not supposed to be very numerous, I have several times got as many as one hundred and fifty to four guns, in the course of the day. Men were regularly engaged trapping them on this station, and selling them in

the Melbourne market. The best thing to be done to keep them down would be, I should think, to import weasels and stoats, as has been done in parts of New Zealand, where the rabbits had become a regular pest.

There will be railway communication opened all the way (except about three miles across the Murray River) between Melbourne and Sydney, by the end of 1880. When I went, there was still about eighty miles of coaching to be done, and the coach was arranged to leave Albury (a town on the frontier of New South Wales) at midnight—a most uncomfortable time to start. It was a pouring wet night, and I cannot wish those people who recommended me to make the journey overland any worse fate than to have to make the journey themselves under similar circumstances.

We stopped at about 6.30 A.M. for breakfast, and then went straight on to Wagga Wagga (noted as the residence of the

claimant in the great Tichborne trial), where we arrived at about 3 P.M. The train on to Sydney started at about 6 P.M., and I was so unfortunate as to get it on the night on which the one sleeping car which they possess did not run. No arrangements seem to be made for getting substantial refreshments on the line, and so I was very glad to arrive at Sydney, thoroughly tired out, at about 7 o'clock in the morning.

The town of Sydney is very different in appearance from Melbourne: it was planned before English people had arrived at wishing to have broad and straight streets; and the consequence is, that although it has buildings quite as fine, if not finer, than Melbourne, they do not make such a show, as the streets are too narrow for them to be well seen. There are two principal streets which are pretty straight, but follow the line of the harbour a little.

Melbourne people are very fond of vaunting their town, as compared with Sydney;

but they should not forget that it was entirely planned and laid out in the Sydney land office, Melbourne being only a town in the Port Philip district, at that time under the New South Wales government.

The harbour of Sydney is the chief feature of the place, and the inhabitants are justly proud of it. It is the largest and best in the world; the harbour of Rio being the only other which approaches it. An arm of the sea almost land-locked, and extending for some twenty miles inland, with good deep water most of the way, and numerous bays and inlets along its entire course—it offers opportunities for quays to be built, at which the largest ocean ships can lie, such as I do not suppose exist anywhere else.

The hotels of Sydney are decidedly inferior to those in Melbourne, but I was myself fortunate enough to get elected an honorary member of the Union Club—a most com-

fortable and well-managed place. The clubs in Australia generally are very hospitable to strangers, and it is usual for them to elect any one who is well-introduced as an honorary member for the time of his stay in the colony: I fear that the members of these clubs must consider London inhospitable, when they come there, and do not find similar civility offered to them.

There are plenty of pretty excursions to be made around Sydney, and one may here often find people with leisure to make them, which one will seldom find in Melbourne: pleasure steamers are continually running all about the harbour, and buses run to other suburbs on the outer coast. Botany Bay is now one of the prettiest of these, and retains nothing of its former ill-omened reputation but the name. There are several tea-gardens, and a skating-rink here now, and it is a favourite place of resort for those who are tired with the noise and heat of the town.

Every one who visits Sydney should take care to arrange a visit to the Blue Mountains. The railway goes over them, attaining a height of some four thousand feet at the highest point. The ascent is rapid, and is made by a succession of zigzag slopes—the train being reversed at the end of each slope. Beautiful scenery is to be seen from the train itself, both in going up the zigzag and in descending by a similar one on the further side from Sydney. We formed a party of four, all strangers to the country, and, up to the time of our start, almost strangers to each other. Being four, we were able to while away the journey by playing whist wherever there was no good scenery to be seen.

We travelled over the mountains, and through to Bathurst, about 150 miles, on the first day. Bathurst is a thriving town, depending mostly on squatting, and is healthy, and very cold in winter. We got a cold bath early in the morning, which

nearly froze the marrow in our bones ; and then we went back again on our yesterday's route, and stopped at Mount Victoria, about the highest point on the Blue Mountains, and where there is an hotel, and small village.

The hotel proved to be an excellent one, and we enjoyed thoroughly a good dinner which was prepared for us, as also a bright fire in the room. After dinner various speculations arose as to the nationality of our waiter. It was quite clear by his accent that he was not English. Two maintained that he must be a Spaniard, while another thought he must be French. I reserved my opinion, though I thought I knew to what nation he belonged. We agreed to ask him his name, to see if by that means we could get a clue to his nationality. We did ask it ; and he replied that it was Michael O'Donogan ! Of course I gave in to the majority then, and acknowledged that he must be a Spaniard.

The next morning, being Sunday, we attended service in a neat little church close to the hotel, and afterwards went to the summit of Mount Victoria, whence a beautiful view is obtained. In the afternoon we went to see "Govett's Leap," the grandest piece of scenery in the Blue Mountains. It is a vast depression, some seven miles by three miles in extent, surrounded on all sides by precipitous cliffs, varying in height from two to three thousand feet. One can lie down on a projecting rock and look right down into it, and the effect is grand in the extreme. At first one feels rather as if the rock must give way and let one fall into the abyss below, but one soon gets confidence, and the majestic glory of the scene unfolds itself to view. The sharply-defined lights and shadows in the clear frosty air, added much to the beauty of the scene when we saw it. We got back again late to the hotel at Mount Victoria, and again enjoyed

a good dinner under the auspices of our "Spanish" waiter.

Another day of sight-seeing brought us to the end of the wonders of the Blue Mountains and back to Sydney. Our whole journey was much enlivened by a very stupid guide-book published in Sydney; we were enabled to extract mirth from it on account of the extreme stupidity of its attempts at high-flown language.

From Sydney I embarked for England *viâ* the Cape of Good Hope, on board the good but slow ship *Revenge*. She was crowded with passengers and had a full cargo when she left Melbourne, at which port we touched, to fill up. We had a vast quantity of children on board; and only on board ship can one thoroughly decide whether one is really fond of children or not. The little darlings are usually allowed to run about at their own sweet (or otherwise) will, as the parents are often sea-sick, or at any rate, too indolent to see

that their children do not get in other people's way, and the hired nurses are generally engaged in making love to one of the stewards or other males to be found on board.

We had as passengers, a youthful tight-rope dancer, with a man in charge of him; and they brought with them a vast quantity of luggage in cases supposed to contain their paraphernalia, including, as they said, empty firework cases. As these things were being put down in the hold, one of the cases got slightly damaged, and a blackish powder was observed to be running out of it. The mate, who was inspecting the stowage of the cargo, had the curiosity to take some of this in his hand and apply a match to it—and it proved to be gunpowder! Of course there was a row, and the owner was told to show all the cases which contained dangerous substances, on pain of having the fine to which he had made himself liable (£100, I think) enforced. Nearly all the cases

turned out to contain explosives of some sort, carefully packed at the top with empty cardboard cases. We committed them to the deep, much to the owner's disgust—though I think he got off very lightly, in not having the fine enforced against him as well, considering that he preferred deliberately to endanger the safety of the ship, instead of declaring of what a dangerous character his luggage was, and paying proper freight for them to be duly looked after, and secured in a proper place.

I had three other companions in my cabin, so there was no room to spare. Four pegs were in the cabin, for us to hang our clothes on, and one of our number at once occupied three of them with his clothes, and left the other one for us three to hang ours on. It was explained to him that four pegs for four people meant one peg each, by the simple process of taking his things down and depositing them in a

lump on the floor; and he did not again offend in this manner.

I wish here to protest against the practice of stewards at sea, and waiters on land, of taking away one's piece of bread the moment that one's eyes cease to watch it. I like to keep a piece of bread to near the end of dinner, and though the waiting was by no means too good on other points, I always found a man behind lowering for my bit of bread. If one gets another piece it is by no means the same thing, as one gets attached to one's *own* piece of bread.

We were thirty-one days from Melbourne to the Cape of Good Hope, and did not sight land the whole way. The voyage was uneventful save for the squabbles which were continually taking place between the various families of children—their parents all took sides with their children, and the various heartburnings which arose from the most trivial matters were most interesting for a bachelor outsider to watch. We were also

blessed with a strong dissenting element on board, who made Sunday evenings hideous by singing Moody and Sankey's hymns through their noses, and out of tune. The most shining light among these was a tailor from Sydney, who would make bets on every conceivable subject, and when he lost said that his conscience disapproved of betting ! He was the only man on board whose disagreements took a really serious turn, as once, with him, the quarrel with another passenger actually came to blows. It may be easily imagined that we were very glad when we at last got to Cape Town ; especially as a gloom had been cast over the ship for a few days before by the death of a passenger, who had been very ill during the whole voyage. He was buried at sea, and I think that every one found the beautiful burial service of our Church even more impressive on the lonely ocean than it is on land.

Cape Town, as every one knows, lies on a flat piece of land between the Table Mountain

and the sea. When we arrived the mountain was to be seen quite unclouded to its summit, but I believe it is generally covered with a cloud at the top—called the “table cloth,” and a sure sign of bad weather. The town is very Dutch in its appearance, and well planted with trees, owing to wise regulations of the early Dutch colonists, with regard to planting and felling trees. The soil is mostly bright red, and forms a vivid contrast with the green of the trees, reminding me forcibly of Colombo in Ceylon. There are some lovely drives about the town, especially to the far-famed Constantia vineyard, which one is allowed to see, by the civility of the owners. Fruit is to be had in great abundance in the market, and was very welcome to us after our long sea journey.

We spent about five days here, owing to a difficulty in getting coal on board our ship, and at the end of that time we were glad to resume our voyage. We passed Teneriffe at a distance of 130 miles, and could distinctly

see its lofty peak, even at that distance. Madeira was also passed close enough for us to see the houses on shore, but we did not stop there. After twenty-nine days' steaming we at length got into the Channel, and in sight of old England again, and here I was amused by the *naïve* remarks of would-be knowing Australians. Ventnor, Isle of Wight, was put down as a "nice little township," and the whole island as "fair feed for sheep;" whilst in going up the Thames I was asked what all the "cleared land" in sight was for.

Having reached an end of my wanderings for the present, I must here wish my readers good-bye, or, if I receive encouragement from the public, *au revoir*.

THE END.

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